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# BLACK HISTORY IN CANADA

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## EDUCATION GUIDE



# A MESSAGE TO TEACHERS

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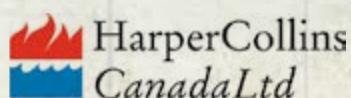
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Explore additional images, video and maps in the interactive guide to *The Book of Negroes* miniseries available now for iPad and iPhone.



Historica Canada is the country's largest organization dedicated to enhancing awareness of Canada's history and citizenship. For more information, visit [HistoricaCanada.ca](http://HistoricaCanada.ca).

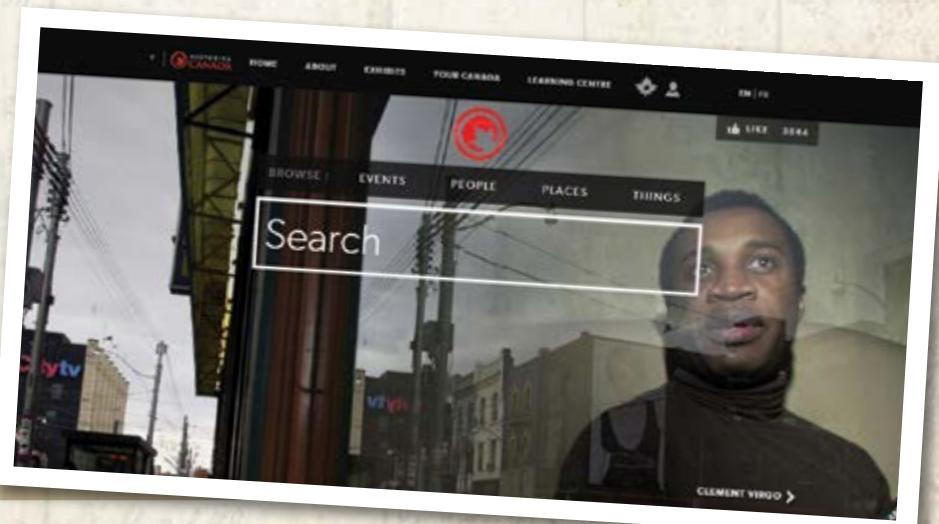
The Black History in Canada Education Guide explores seminal events and personalities in Black Canadian history through engaging discussion and interactive activities. This innovative bilingual tool contains updated revisions from the original Guide, which was created in 2010.

The purpose of this revised Guide is to enhance your students' critical awareness and appreciation of the Black Canadian experience, grounded in Lawrence Hill's award-winning historical fiction, *The Book of Negroes*, the remarkable journey of Aminata Diallo and the historic British document known as the "Book of Negroes."

This powerful story has now been adapted to the screen for the CBC in a miniseries available in time for the commencement of the International Decade for People of African Descent, which begins on 1 January 2015 and ends on 31 December 2024. We encourage teachers to share the series with their students but please note it does include sensitive language. Please discuss the language in the series prior to viewing. Further, teachers may wish to take this opportunity to engage in a broader conversation with their students about the concepts and language around race and racism. For example, the term "Black" as a reference to people of African descent is rooted in racism. Now, the term is used as one of identity, resistance and shared historical experience. In addition, please note that the Guide primarily uses contemporary language when referring to Canada, provinces and cities. When it is appropriate, please discuss the historical language connected to the time frame you are examining.

Structured around themes of journey, slavery, human rights, passage to Canada, preserving history and making history in the 21st century, this Guide asks students to examine issues of identity, equality, community, justice and nation-building in both a historical and contemporary context. Additional resources and information related to Black history in Canada are available on *The Canadian Encyclopedia*.

This Guide was made possible with the generous support of TD Bank Group, whose commitment to Black history and culture has been celebrated. We hope it will assist you in teaching this important aspect of Canadian history in your English, Social Studies, History or Law classroom.



Please visit *The Canadian Encyclopedia* at  
[TheCanadianEncyclopedia.ca](http://TheCanadianEncyclopedia.ca)

The CBC miniseries was produced by Conquering Lion Pictures & Out of Africa Entertainment, in association with Entertainment One and Idlewild Films.

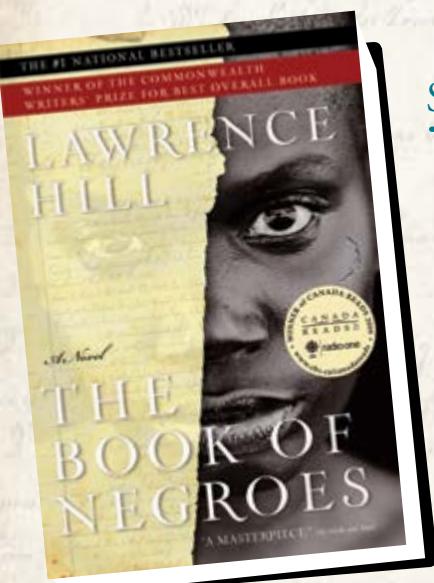
# A MESSAGE FROM AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR LAWRENCE HILL

*"I must most earnestly entreat your assistance, without servants nothing can be done ... Black Slaves are certainly the only people to be depended upon ... pray therefore if possible procure for me two Stout Young fellows ... [and] buy for each a clean young wife, who can wash and do the female offices about a farm, I shall begrudge no price ..."*

These lines come from a letter written in 1763 to John Watts in New York. Who do you think wrote the letter? Perhaps a farmer in Barbados, South Carolina, or Virginia? Actually, this urgent request for slaves came from James Murray, governor of Québec. The average 16-year-old in Canada can tell you something about slavery and abolition in the United States. Many of us have read American novels such as *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Roots*.

But have we read our own authors such as Dionne Brand, Afua Cooper and George Elliott Clarke? Do we know that the story of African-Canadians spans more than 400 years, and includes slavery, abolition, pioneering, urban growth, segregation, the civil rights movement and a long engagement in civic life?

I wrote the novel *The Book of Negroes* to remove the dehumanizing mask of slavery and to explore an African woman's intimate experiences and emotions as she travels the world in the 18th century. I like to think that there is a novel for every one of the 3,000 Black Loyalists whose names were entered into the British naval ledger known as the "Book of Negroes" and who then — as a reward for service to the British on the losing side of the American Revolutionary War — were sent by ship from Manhattan to Nova Scotia in 1783. Imagining Aminata Diallo's life helped me appreciate the struggles of the 18th century Black Loyalists as they travelled back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean, touching down in colonial America, early Canada, West Africa and Europe in pursuit of freedom and home. Luckily for writers and readers, fiction helps us see where we have been and who we are now.



## SYNOPSIS: THE BOOK OF NEGROES

Abducted as an 11-year-old child from her village in West Africa and forced to walk for months to the sea in a coffle — a string of slaves — Aminata Diallo is sent to live as a slave in South Carolina. Years later, she forges her way to freedom, serving the British in the Revolutionary War and registering her name in the historic "Book of Negroes." This book, an actual document, provides a short but immensely revealing record of some 3,000 Black Loyalists who left the United States for resettlement in Nova Scotia. A trained bookkeeper, Aminata is enlisted to record the names of these African-Americans travelling to Nova Scotia in pursuit of land and a new way of life. But when the Loyalists arrive in Canada in 1783, they find that the haven they'd been seeking is steeped in an oppression all its own. Aminata is among the pioneers of Nova Scotia to settle Shelburne and the neighbouring Black community of Birchtown. Her journey from slavery to liberation, and her struggle against a world hostile to her colour and her sex, speaks to the experience of a founding generation of African-Canadians.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ① How would it feel to be taken from your parents, your family and the place you call home, never to return?
- ② How is the concept of **displacement** central to the experience of enslaved Africans like Aminata?

**DISPLACEMENT:** when people are forced from their homes, typically because of war, persecution or natural disaster.



# BLACK HISTORY IN

1689

**LOUIS XIV  
AUTHORIZED SLAVERY  
IN NEW FRANCE**

King Louis XIV formally authorized slavery in New France.

1600s

1776

**BLACK LOYALISTS  
REACHED NOVA SCOTIA**

The British promised freedom, land and rights to slaves and free Black people in exchange for service during the American Revolution, 1775–1783.

1700s

CIRCA  
1608

**FIRST BLACK PERSON  
IN CANADA**

The first Black person thought to have set foot on land that is now referred to as Canada was Mathieu Da Costa, a free man who was hired as an interpreter for Samuel de Champlain's 1605 excursion.

SPRING  
1734

**MARIE-JOSEPHE  
ANGÉLIQUE TORTURED  
AND HANGED**

Enslaved Black woman Marie-Josephe Angélique was accused of setting fire to the house of her “owner” in Montréal. Although to this day it is unclear whether Angélique actually set the fire, she was tortured and hanged for her “crime.”

26–27 JULY  
1784

**CANADA'S FIRST RACE RIOT  
ROCKED NOVA SCOTIA**

The Black Loyalists were among the first settlers in Shelburne, Nova Scotia. On its fringes, they established their own community, Birchtown. Hundreds of White disbanded soldiers started a riot when they found themselves competing for jobs with Black neighbours who were paid less for the same work.

19 JUNE  
1793

**UPPER CANADA'S LIEUTENANT-GOVERNOR JOHN GRAVES SIMCOE'S ANTI-SLAVE TRADE BILL**

Attorney General White introduced Lieutenant-Governor John Graves Simcoe's anti-slavery measure and it passed. The bill did not ban slavery completely but marked its gradual prohibition.

1790

**IMPERIAL STATUTE**

The Imperial Statute of 1790 effectively allowed settlers to bring enslaved persons to Upper Canada. Under the statute, those enslaved had only to be fed and clothed.

15 JANUARY  
1792

**THE BLACK  
LOYALIST EXODUS**

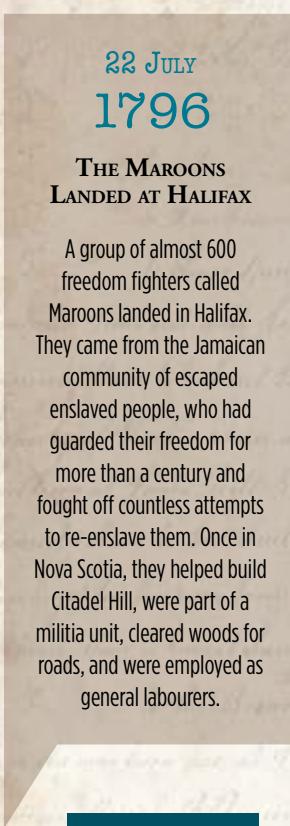
The difficulty of supporting themselves in the face of widespread discrimination convinced almost 1,200 Black Loyalists to leave Halifax and relocate to Africa (Sierra Leone).

1794

**THE PETITION OF  
FREE NEGROES**

Richard Pierpoint and other Black veterans petitioned the government of Upper Canada to grant them land adjacent to each other rather than disperse it amongst White settlers. The *Petition of Free Negroes*, as it was known, aimed to create a Black community where members would help and support each other. The petition was rejected for unknown reasons.

# CANADA TIMELINE



22 JULY

1796

## THE MAROONS LANDED AT HALIFAX

A group of almost 600 freedom fighters called Maroons landed in Halifax. They came from the Jamaican community of escaped enslaved people, who had guarded their freedom for more than a century and fought off countless attempts to re-enslave them. Once in Nova Scotia, they helped build Citadel Hill, were part of a militia unit, cleared woods for roads, and were employed as general labourers.

1812-1815

## THE "COLOURED TROOPS" & THE WAR OF 1812

Thousands of Black volunteers fought for the British during the War of 1812.

28 AUGUST  
1833

## BRITISH PARLIAMENT ABOLISHED SLAVERY

Slavery was abolished throughout the British colonies by an Imperial Act which became effective 1 August 1834. Many Canadians continue to celebrate 1 August as Emancipation Day.

*Prince Edward Island abolished slavery in 1825.*

16 NOVEMBER  
1857

## WILLIAM NEILSON HALL WON THE VICTORIA CROSS

William Hall served aboard the HMS *Shannon* in Calcutta during the 1857 Indian Mutiny. He was the first Canadian naval recipient, the first Black person and the first Nova Scotian to win the Victoria Cross.

1800s

1800

## CANADA'S SECOND BACK-TO-AFRICA MOVEMENT

After several years of neglect, poor conditions and intolerance, several hundred Jamaican Maroons abandoned Nova Scotia and set sail for Freetown, Sierra Leone.

1815-1860

## THE UNDERGROUND RAILROAD

Canada's reputation as a safe haven for Black people grew during and after the War of 1812.

Between 1815 and 1860, tens of thousands of African-Americans bravely sought refuge in Canada via the legendary Underground Railroad.

1850

## FUGITIVE SLAVE ACT

The *Fugitive Slave Act* of 1850 was enacted by the United States Congress on 18 September 1850. It greatly influenced the migration of African-Americans into Canada. It was repealed on 28 June 1864.

26 FEBRUARY  
1851

## FORMATION OF THE ANTI-SLAVERY SOCIETY OF CANADA

The number of abolitionist sympathizers grew in Canada in the 1850s-1860s. The Anti-Slavery Society of Canada was formed "to aid in the extinction of Slavery all over the world."

1861

## THE VICTORIA PIONEER RIFLES

In 1851, James Douglas became the first appointed Black politician in Canada and then took over as governor of the colony of British Columbia. African-Americans invited in by James Douglas emigrated from California to Victoria to become Canada's first and only all-Black police force.



# BLACK HISTORY IN

FEBRUARY  
1911

## ANTI-BLACK CAMPAIGN

By 1909, hundreds of Black people from Oklahoma moved to the Canadian Prairies, where they met severe discrimination. In 1911, a few newspapers in Winnipeg even predicted that the Dominion government would move to exclude "Negro immigrants."

1923

## HOGAN'S ALLEY IN VANCOUVER

Hundreds of Black Canadians settled in the community of Strathcona on the east side of the city of Vancouver. The community was recognized with a commemorative Black History Month stamp by Canada Post in 2014.

14 MARCH  
1944

## ONTARIO PASSES RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ACT

Ontario was the first province to respond to the battle against oppression when it passed the *Racial Discrimination Act* of 1944, a landmark legislation prohibiting the publication and display of any symbol, sign, or notice that expressed ethnic, racial, or religious discrimination. On 1 April 1947, *The Saskatchewan Bill of Rights Act* passed under Tommy Douglas, marking Canada's first general law prohibiting discrimination.

6 APRIL  
1954

## ONTARIO GOVERNMENT PASSED FAIR ACCOMMODATION PRACTICES ACT

The *Act* declared, "no one can deny to any person or class of persons the accommodation, services or facilities usually available to members of the public." The *Act* also precluded anyone from posting discriminatory signs.

19 JANUARY  
1962

## FAIRCLOUGH DISMANTLED DISCRIMINATORY POLICY

While she served as Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Ellen Fairclough radically reformed the country's "White Canada" immigration policy, helping to reduce racial discrimination in Canada's policies.

1900s

1914-1918

## BLACK CANADIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR

In 1916, military officials authorized the creation of the No. 2 Construction Battalion. This battalion of exclusively Black soldiers was not permitted to fight. Instead, they served in France with the Canadian Forestry Corps.

1939-1945

## BLACK CANADIAN INVOLVEMENT IN THE SECOND WORLD WAR

The Canadian military initially rejected Black volunteers, but many were later accepted into the Regular Army and officer corps. On the home front, the all-Black Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters was one of the greatest success stories of the war years.

18 APRIL  
1946

## JACKIE ROBINSON PLAYS HIS FIRST GAME FOR THE MONTREAL ROYALS

When he joined the Montreal Royals, Jackie Robinson became the first Black player in modern "organized" baseball. To view a Heritage Minute on Jackie Robinson, visit [HistoricaCanada.ca](http://HistoricaCanada.ca).

18 JANUARY  
1958

## WILLIE O'REE BREAKS BARRIERS ON THE ICE

Scouted from the Quebec Aces, Willie O'Ree was the first Black player in the NHL. He played for the Boston Bruins and his first game was against the Montreal Canadiens.

25 SEPTEMBER  
1963

## FIRST BLACK PERSON ELECTED TO A CANADIAN PARLIAMENT

Leonard Braithwaite became the first Black person in a provincial legislature when he was elected as the Liberal member for Etobicoke, Ontario, in 1963. In 1964, Braithwaite introduced legislation to remove the law that allowed segregated schools to exist.

BOBBIE CRUMPT FAMILY IN EDMONTON, ALBERTA, C. 1918. ONE OF THE MANY BLACK FAMILIES TO MOVE FROM OKLAHOMA TO THE PRAIRIES IN THE 1910S (COURTESY GLENBOW ARCHIVES/NYA-4210-1). LEONARD BRAITHWAITE WITH TWO FELLOWS IN ENGLAND, DATE UNKNOWN (COURTESY THE MEMORY PROJECT, HISTORICA CANADA). STILL FROM JACKIE ROBINSON HERITAGE MINUTE, 1997 (COURTESY HISTORICA CANADA).

6

# CANADA TIMELINE CONTINUED



OCTOBER  
1971

## PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU INTRODUCED CANADA'S MULTICULTURAL POLICY

Canada's multiculturalism policy grew partly in reaction to the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism.

1972

## FIRST BLACK WOMAN ELECTED TO CANADIAN PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE

Rosemary Brown was elected as the New Democratic Party member for Vancouver-Burrard, British Columbia. Further, in 1975, Rosemary Brown was the first Black woman to run for leadership of a Canadian federal political party.

1974

## OSCAR PETERSON WON GRAMMY

Jazz pianist Oscar Peterson won his first Grammy in 1974. He went on to win seven others, including the coveted Lifetime Achievement Grammy in 1997.

1993

## THE FIRST BLACK WOMAN ELECTED TO PARLIAMENT

Jean Augustine was the first Black woman to be elected to the House of Commons in a federal Cabinet.



6 AUGUST  
1995

## CANADIAN SPRINTER BECAME "WORLD'S FASTEST HUMAN"

Donovan Bailey assumed the title of "World's Fastest Human" by winning the 100-metre sprint at the World Track Championships in Göteborg, Sweden.

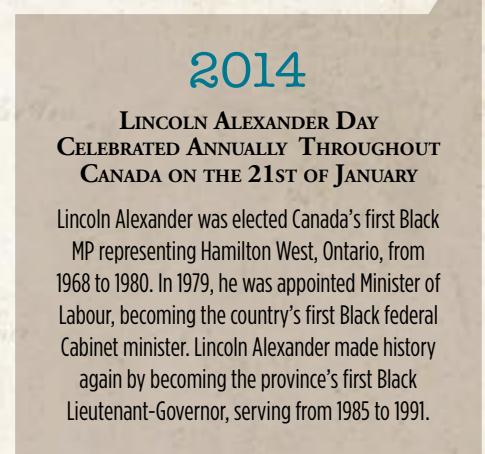
2000s



24 FEBRUARY  
2010

## THE AFRICVILLE APOLOGY

In 1962, the City of Halifax decided to demolish Africville, the historic Black neighbourhood of Halifax. Anti-Black racism combined with a drive for "urban renewal" led the city to threaten eviction of the neighbourhood's property-owning Black residents if they did not voluntarily sell their properties and relocate. In 2010, the mayor of Halifax apologized for the destruction of Africville on behalf of the City of Halifax.



2014

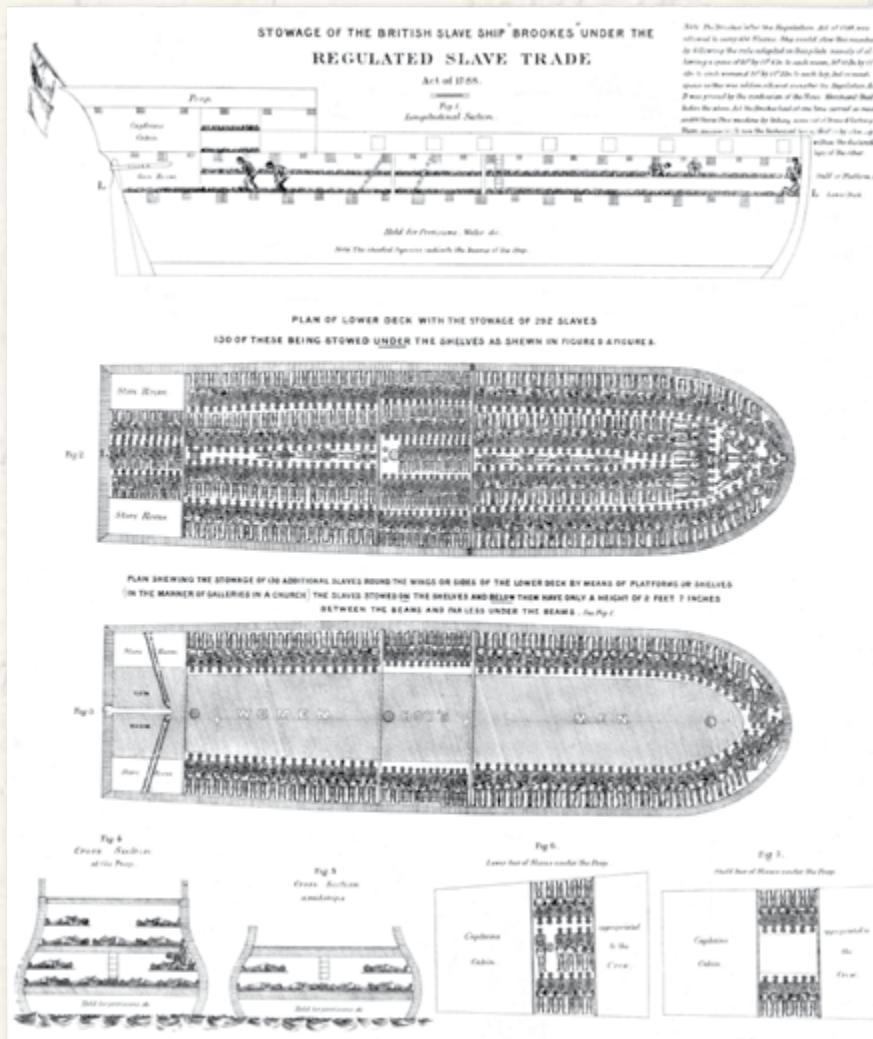
## LINCOLN ALEXANDER DAY CELEBRATED ANNUALLY THROUGHOUT CANADA ON THE 21ST OF JANUARY

Lincoln Alexander was elected Canada's first Black MP representing Hamilton West, Ontario, from 1968 to 1980. In 1979, he was appointed Minister of Labour, becoming the country's first Black federal Cabinet minister. Lincoln Alexander made history again by becoming the province's first Black Lieutenant-Governor, serving from 1985 to 1991.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ① From the timeline, identify significant factors/issues that likely motivated the fight for equal rights and explain your choices.
- ② Identify legislative changes intended to improve the quality of life for Black people in Canada.
- ③ Many important people and events related to the history of Blacks in Canada are not included in the timeline. Identify one and provide an argument for inclusion.

# JOURNEY: THE STORY OF AMINATA DIALLO



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ① Create a timeline of the various journeys Aminata has taken throughout her life. Explain how each destination influenced the development of her personality.
- ② Using examples from the miniseries or book, identify the tasks that enslaved Africans were forced to perform. What skills did they bring from Africa to support their work?
- ③ Examine the above engraving of the interior of a slave ship from 1788. Conduct some research on the **Middle Passage** and describe the conditions on the slave ship and the resulting hardships faced by the enslaved Africans during the journey.
- ④ Are there legacies of African enslavement evident today?
- ⑤ Cite examples in Aminata's behaviour that speak to her resilience. Find instances in the story where she exhibited her resistance to being enslaved.

These women were enslaved in Canada:

Chloe Cooley, enslaved in Niagara, Ontario

Marie-Josèphe Angélique, enslaved in Montréal, Québec

Nancy, enslaved in New Brunswick

Sophia Pooley, enslaved in Burlington, Ontario

Charlotte, enslaved in Montréal, Québec

Peggy Pompadour, enslaved in Toronto, Ontario

Research one of these women and compare her with Aminata. What experiences and characteristics do they share? Where do they differ? How did she respond to enslavement in comparison with Aminata? Refer to *TheCanadianEncyclopedia.ca* and other sources for research purposes.

*"Africa is my homeland. But I have weathered enough migrations for five lifetimes."*

- AMINATA DIALLO

Aminata's experience, like that of many African-Canadians, is defined by her migration – to America, Canada, Africa, and finally England. Uprooted by the **triangular slave trade** which brought captives from Africa to Europe, the Caribbean and the Americas, Aminata became part of the African **Diaspora**. This passage describes the beginning of Aminata's first ocean-crossing as a captive bound for slavery in America.

*I dreaded the big boat up ahead, growing larger with each oar stroke. In size, it dwarfed a twelve-man canoe, and it stank worse than the pen they had put us in on the island. The boat terrified me, but I was even more afraid of sinking deep into the salty water, with no possibility for my spirit to return to my ancestors.... I clenched my teeth and looked out over the water at all my people tied in canoes and being pushed, prodded and pulled up a long plank rising along the great wall of the ship. I turned back to see my homeland. There were mountains in the distance. One of them rose like an enormous lion. But all its power was trapped on the land. It could do nothing for any of us out on the water.*



**THE TRIANGULAR/TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE** brought more than 12 million slaves, crops and goods between Africa, the Caribbean, the Americas and Europe from the late 16th to early 19th centuries.

**DIASPORA:** A community of people living outside of their ancestral homeland.

**MIDDLE PASSAGE:** The horrific journey across the Atlantic Ocean by the millions of African captives taken to the Caribbean and the United States by European slave traders to be enslaved. This voyage could take two to three months and many Africans did not survive the journey.

# SLAVERY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

*“That, I decided, was what it meant to be a slave: your past didn’t matter; in the present you were invisible and you had no claim on the future.”* - AMINATA DIALLO

Enslaved Africans lived and worked in Canada since at least 1628. By 1759, when New France fell to the British, historians estimate that there were between several hundred to several thousand enslaved Black people in Canada, as well as many enslaved Aboriginal peoples. When White Loyalists were allowed to bring enslaved people into Canada after 1783, the Black population almost doubled. In 1807, the slave trade was banned by the British. By 1834, slavery was abolished in Canada and throughout the British Empire. Between 1815 and 1860, some 30,000 enslaved people escaped the United States through the **Underground Railroad** and found refuge in this country.

Despite abolition, Blacks in Canada continued to face considerable challenges because of racism and discrimination.

## DISCUSSION & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ① The existence of slavery in Canada is overshadowed by the existence of slavery in the United States. Why?
- ② Why do you think that this aspect of Canadian history has been and continues to be suppressed?
- ③ What conditions in Nova Scotia prompted the exodus of **Black Loyalists** who returned to Africa (Sierra Leone) in 1792? Provide a few examples from the miniseries or book to support your answer.

The first enslaved Black person in Canada's history was a six-year-old boy, to whom the Jesuit father Paul Le Jeune gave catechism. According to the historian Marcel Trudel, many religious communities in New France practiced slavery. While Pope Paul III had condemned slavery and recognized the fundamental importance of human liberty in 1537, slavery persisted.

- ④ Present your theory about the contradiction between religious doctrines and the actions of Catholics in New France.
- ⑤ Were the attitudes and beliefs about Black people held by the Catholic Church reflective of wider society at that time? Provide a few examples from the miniseries or the book to back up your argument.

Abolitionism was a major human rights movement in North America in the 19th century. The Underground Railroad was a network of pathways to freedom that involved a breadth of people from diverse backgrounds with one common goal — the abolition of slavery.

- ⑥ Select any three from the following list and explain their participation in the quest for freedom in Canada. Identify a primary or secondary source document that supports their views. Refer to *TheCanadianEncyclopedia.ca* and other sources:

Harriet Tubman  
William King

Mary Ann Shadd  
George Brown

Henry and Mary Bibb  
Samuel Ringgold Ward

Thornton and Lucie Blackburn

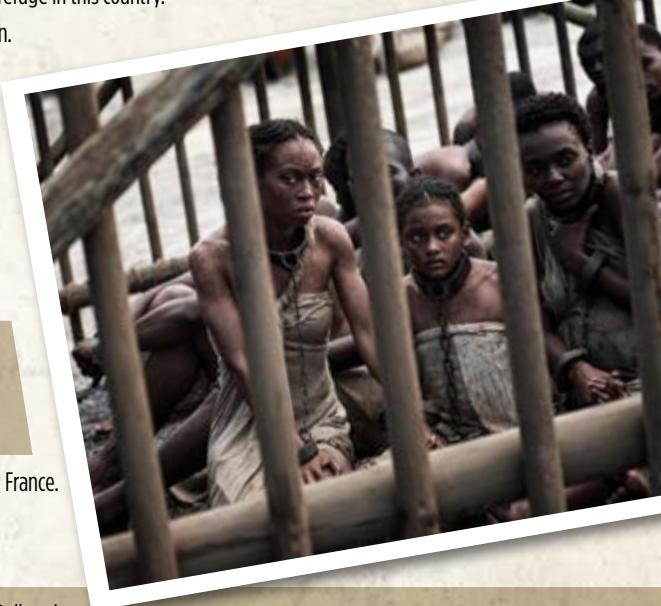
- ⑦ Racial segregation and discrimination in employment, education and housing was practiced in Canada. What did you learn about the past experiences of African-Canadians including Viola Desmond? How do you think their actions helped further the cause of African-Canadians today?
- ⑧ Conduct some research about Hollywood films based on slavery. Critically examine the history being depicted.

In 2013, the United Nations declared the decade 2015 to 2024 the International Decade for People of African Descent. The theme of the decade is “People of African Descent: Recognition, Justice, and Development.” The proclamation focuses on the following objectives:

- A To strengthen national, regional and international action and cooperation in relation to the full enjoyment of economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights by people of African descent, and their full and equal participation in all aspects of society;
  - B To promote a greater knowledge of and respect for the diverse heritage, culture and contribution of people of African descent to the development of societies;
  - C To adopt and strengthen national, regional and international legal frameworks in accordance with the Durban Declaration and Programme of Action and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and to ensure their full and effective implementation.
- ⑨ Discuss one of the following questions: How realistic is this UN initiative? Explain your opinion. What challenges do you think the UN will face in advancing this initiative? Why?

There is a growing movement by peoples of African descent around the world to pursue **reparations** from European nations that traded African people. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) is an organization of 15 Caribbean nations and dependencies. Established in 1973, CARICOM is pursuing compensation and apologies from the United Kingdom and seven other European countries – France, Spain, Portugal, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, and Denmark – who profited from the enslavement of African peoples.

- ⑩ Why do you think reparations are justified or why do you disagree with the demand for reparations? Should Canada be considered a plaintiff or a defendant in this case? What form could reparations take? Justify your answer.
- ⑪ As a class, discuss and critically examine the existence of racism and discrimination faced by Black Canadians today.



### UNDERGROUND RAILROAD:

A secret network of routes, safe houses and persons that aided in the escape of enslaved African-Americans into Canada during the 19th century.

**REPARATIONS** are the idea that the governments or institutions that profited from slavery should be obligated to compensate the descendants of enslaved Blacks whose labour produced the wealth generated by the Atlantic slave trade.

Joseph James Mitchell	Annapolis Royal	Gibbons	16	Male	Capt. Max Black Pioneers
		Thomas Peters	15	Ordinary fellow	Able
		Murphy State	30	Able	Able
		George Hendle	35	Able	
		Soly	18	All Sex	Capt. Angus W. Ronald Black Pioneers
		Sally Peters	30	All Month	Able
		Clavy	12	Liberty Child	"
		John	1½	Infant	Black Pioneers
		John Satter	35	Stout fellow	Able
		Nancy Jenkins	19	Liberty Month	Capt. A. W. Ronald
		Suey	25	Stout Month	Able
		Abraham	2	Infant	Black Pioneers
		Judy Stewart	119	Ordinary Month	

## PASSAGE TO CANADA

*"No place in the world was entirely safe for an African, and ... for many of us, survival depended on perpetual migration."*

- AMINATA DIALLO



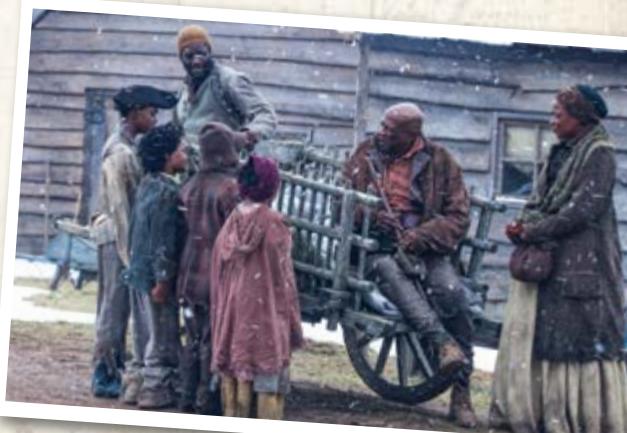
The voyage of Aminata from New York to Nova Scotia is based on the actual passage of about 3,000 **Black Loyalists** from the newly formed United States into Canada in 1783. After the signing of the **Treaty of Paris in 1783**, an exodus of Black Loyalists to Nova Scotia (as well as to Québec, the West Indies, England and Belgium) began. The names of the passengers sailing to Nova Scotia in 1783 were recorded in the "Book of Negroes." The list included physical descriptions along with each person's status as slave or free. Of the more than 3,000 Black Loyalists who arrived in Nova Scotia, about 1,200 left after 10 years because of the difficult conditions and discrimination they faced. They sailed in 1792 from Halifax to found the new colony of Freetown in Sierra Leone, forming the first major back-to-Africa exodus in the history of the Americas. The colonists of Freetown faced many challenges in settling, but they were free and resolute in their endeavour to succeed.

### DISCUSSION & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- ① In what ways was the decision to send Black Loyalists to Nova Scotia historically significant to the settlement of Canada?
- ② Many Black Loyalists faced prejudicial treatment and hardship in Nova Scotia, New Brunswick and Ontario. Research one of the following topics or persons and present your findings to the class:

The burning of Guysborough	Royal Charter for Saint John, New Brunswick, 1785
The Shelburne and Birchtown riots	The petitions of Black Loyalists in Ontario
Thomas Peters	Richard Pierpoint

For information on other historic Black settlements in Canada, visit [TheCanadianEncyclopedia.ca](http://TheCanadianEncyclopedia.ca).



### EVALUATING HISTORIC SOURCES & MODERN STORIES OF MIGRATION

The experiences of enslaved Africans have been documented in a number of primary resources, including the "Book of Negroes," which are available online. Former enslaved people like Olaudah Equiano, Frederick Douglass, Josiah Henson and William Wells Brown wrote memoirs while others like British slave ship surgeon Alexander Falconbridge also wrote accounts.

**BLACK LOYALISTS** were African-American slaves who were offered and received freedom in return for joining the British forces against the Continental army during the American Revolution.

**THE TREATY OF PARIS (1783)** concluded the American Revolution. Britain acknowledged American independence, and the Americans promised restitution for British Loyalists, though these promises weren't always fulfilled. Many Loyalists, including Black Loyalists, took the opportunity to leave America for Canada and elsewhere.



1776	to John Bragg Charlestown	1776	1780
1776	to William Campbell Wilmington North	1776	1780
1776	to Stephen Daniel	1776	1780
1776	to John Hind Easton South Virginia	1777	—
1776	to Henry Sumore Cape Fear North Carolina	1780	—
1776	to W. McIlvane Ashby South	1779	G. M. C.
1776	to W. McIlvane Ashby South	1779	G. M. C.
Born within the Linis			
Formerly Slave to W. Salter Philadelphia		1779	G. M. C.
1776	to Benjamin Webb Charlestown South Carolina	1780	—
Certified to be free by Mr. Waller Magistrate of Phila			
Born within the Linis			
Formerly Slave to Alexander Murray Liffner in New York		1776	G. M. C.

## EVALUATING SOURCES: DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- ① What is the importance of primary sources to the study of history? What makes them particularly valuable in the study of the experiences of enslaved Black people?
- ② Consider the following: what may be missing from the primary accounts? What information could be missing from primary sources that could limit learning about a person or an event? What issues can arise when using primary sources in historical research? What can be some disadvantages to using primary sources in historical research?
- ③ Here are some questions to help you analyze primary source documents: what type of document is it? Who produced it? When was it produced? Where was it produced? Why was this document produced? How is this document reflective of the attitudes and beliefs about slavery in Canada at that time?
- ④ In the above excerpt from the “Book of Negroes,” several names including that of abolitionist Thomas Peters are recorded. Choose one of the names listed. Based on the information provided, write a fictionalized account of the first page of this individual’s memoir.
- ⑤ How does writing a historical novel, like Lawrence Hill’s *The Book of Negroes*, differ from writing a history book or a biography? When writing a historical novel what obligation does an author have to adhere to facts?
- ⑥ *The Book of Negroes* examines themes of enslavement, freedom, family, loss, death, home, identity and the importance of literacy. Give examples of each theme from the book or miniseries.

**TO BE SOLD.**

A Very stout Negro wench of about 25 years of age, she can Wash, Iron, Cook, and do any kind of house work. For further particulars apply to Mr. McMurray.



PRINTING-OFFICE, Quebec, 1st May, 1781.

ROKE out of His Majesty's Goal in Quebec, on Saturday morning the 18th of February last, A NEGRO MAN SLAVE named JOE, born in Africa, twenty-six years of age, about five feet seven inches high, a little pitted with the small pox, has several scars on his legs, speaks English and French fluently, and is by trade a Pfeff-man; he had on him when he broke out a blue great coat, a red over-sid jacket, and round hat. He was seen some time ago in the parish of l'Ange Gardien below the falls of Montmorency. All persons at hereby forewarned from harbouring or aiding him to escape, as they may depend on being prosecuted to the utmost rigor of the Law; and whoever will give information where he is harboured, so as that he may be had again, shall receive THREE GUINEAS Reward from the PRINTER of the Quebec GAZETTE.

## PASSAGES CANADA: BLACK MIGRATION TO CANADA

People of African descent migrated to Canada at different times throughout history. Below is a list of people of African descent who, like slaves, were forced from their homeland. Research these groups and identify the time period of their migration to Canada and some of the factors that may have driven them away from their home country and attracted them to another country: Enslaved Blacks, Black Loyalists, free Blacks, Black refugees, freedom seekers, Jamaican Maroons, Black Californians, Black Oklahomans, Caribbean domestics.



## PASSAGES CANADA: MODERN STORIES OF MIGRATION

- ① Choose two or three immigrant testimonials of people of African descent from the Passages Canada Story Archive ([passagescanada.ca](http://passagescanada.ca)) and compare their experiences. How were they similar and how were they different?
- ② Invite a speaker from Passages Canada to share his or her story of immigration. Ask each student to come up with two questions for the speaker about the factors that influenced their decision to leave their homeland and/or immigrate to Canada. Questions could also address their expectations vs. their actual experiences.

**PASSAGES CANADA:** Passages Canada is a national storytelling initiative that nurtures cross-cultural dialogue in Canadian communities. Our volunteer speakers share their personal experiences of identity, culture and immigration with groups of all ages. To become a speaker, or to invite a speaker for free, visit [passagescanada.ca](http://passagescanada.ca).

# PRESERVING HISTORY

The “Book of Negroes” was recorded by hand, written with a fountain pen repeatedly dipped in ink. The stories of Black Loyalists have also been preserved in various documents and captured in the oral traditions of people in the African Diaspora. The novel, *The Book of Negroes*, skilfully illuminates the experiences of Black male and female Loyalists through historical fiction.

There are many ways of preserving history – taking photographs, through paintings and other art forms; recording births, death certificates, and keeping records of military service, conducting interviews with people, writing a letter; keeping a journal/diary and collecting artifacts. Technology is an important aid for preserving history, ensuring that the stories told from the past are documented and continue to be accessible in the future.

- ① Why is it important to study history? What can be learned from the history of slavery? How is remembering a form of resistance?

The **Your Canada** Map offers users a chance to make their research part of Canada’s story through *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. Research the notable people and places linked to Black history in Canada from your community, and add your story to the map. Upload text and images, and pinpoint your story to a geographic landmark.

March 25: The International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade:  
A day to honour the more than 15 million men, women, and children who were forced out of Africa and enslaved.

August 23: International Day for the Remembrance of the Slave Trade and its Abolition:  
A day to recognize the tragedy of the 400-year transatlantic slave trade.

- ② How does Aminata fulfill her childhood dream of becoming a *djeli* (keeper of stories, storyteller, *griot*)?  
Why is the role of storyteller important in African and other cultures?
- ③ In recent years, several countries have opened museums and unveiled historical monuments recalling the history of slavery.  
Identify museums or monuments in your region of Canada. Write a letter to your local MP and argue for the importance of opening a museum dedicated to Black history.
- ④ Singers, songwriters, poets, filmmakers, and authors can all be keepers of history.  
Write a poem, a song, or a short script dedicated to the history of enslaved Black people.
- ⑤ Write a journal entry to document your thoughts about the significance of historical fiction as a way to preserve history.

## MAKING HISTORY IN THE 21st CENTURY

*“African-Canadians have made inestimable contributions to Canada in politics, in the arts, in military service, in technological innovation and in business — all during times characterized by pervasive racism. And these great Canadians not only endured, they succeeded.”*

- THE HONOURABLE DR. DONALD OLIVER, FORMER SENATOR.

FROM: *A REFLECTION ON 50 YEARS OF DIVERSITY ADVOCACY: CULTURAL AND HISTORICAL LEGACY OF BLACK CANADIANS*.

Today’s Black population in Canada is comprised of people from all around the world including Africa, South America, the Caribbean, Europe and the United States. Black Canadians have made important contributions to Canada as writers, activists, musicians and in other countless ways.

In honour of Black History Month, Canada Post has commemorated Black Canadians on stamps including Montréal-born jazz legend Oliver Jones (2013); National Baseball Hall of Famer Fergie Jenkins (2011); poet, author, journalist and activist Carrie Best (2011); Rosemary Brown, the first Black woman elected to a provincial legislature (2009); internationally acclaimed jazz musician, Oscar Peterson (2005).

- ① Which other Black Canadians, communities or events do you think should be honoured on a postage stamp? Conduct some research on a significant Black Canadian and make a case for him or her gracing a postage stamp. *Optional: design the stamp.*

For a collection of contributions and profiles of Black Canadians throughout history, visit [TheCanadianEncyclopedia.ca](http://TheCanadianEncyclopedia.ca) and other sources.

- ② Create a profile of a Black Canadian using computer software/applications such as a Prezi or PowerPoint presentation, or another program of your choice. Include a biography on the person, a photograph of them, and a quotation by the person or about the person.
- ③ Create a time capsule for a contemporary Black Canadian that will be found 50 years from now. What items and artifacts would you include to show this person’s historical significance? Explain your choices.

